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Housekeepers' Chats.

Wednesday, January 7, 1931.

Not for Publication

Subject: "The Child's Own Corner." Information from article in The Country Gentleman by Mrs. Rowena Schmidt Carpenter of the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

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"The jump from a good-sized house in the country to a small city apartment has its disadvantages," sighed my friend, the Mother of the Three Liveliest. The Three Liveliest were having naps and we were indulging in a little after-lunch tea before the fireplace.

"As long as we lived in a roomy house, there was some order in our home. But since we moved, everything seems to be out of place all the time. The children insist on playing all over the house and leaving their possessions everywhere and anywhere. I spend all my time picking up after them and even then, callers are sure to come in and find Jean's doll family in the easy chair and stumble over Jack's electric train established in the cloak closet. Something is wrong, Aunt Sammy, but I can't find out what it is. But worse than disorder is the children's attitude. They don't seem able to amuse themselves comfortably any more but are constantly complaining that they have no place to play. Think of that when they actually have possession of a whole house. I have to watch them every minute to stop them from damaging all the furniture we own. Some more tea, Aunt Sammy?"

"Just one more small cup with one lump of sugar and one slice of lemon, please."

"There are new books on child behavior, Aunt Sammy. I've read several and learned a good deal. But not one of them tells me how to deal with three children who don't take to apartment life gracefully. No one suggests successful methods of making both children and parents happy in our situation. I thought perhaps some of your home economics friends might be willing to make some helpful suggestions."

"Of course, they would," I said, "In fact one of them already has. Right here in my bag is a magazine article by Mrs. Rowena Schmidt Carpenter that I've just been reading. It looks to me as if it has a lot of good ideas -- just meant for you."

"If you feel in the mood, Aunt Sammy, I wish you'd read one or two paragraphs aloud to me. I should like to know what Mrs. Carpenter would do with my Three Liveliest."

"I think she would leave them alone and spend her efforts arranging this new home of yours to give comfort and convenience to the whole family."

"Do read me some of her ideas."

"I'll start with a paragraph about the ideal home. 'The ideal home is arranged and equipped so that every member of the family has a place to keep his own belongings and to follow his own interests undisturbed at times. This does not necessarily require a large house but it does require thoughtful planning of the outlay and furnishings of any home, large or small. Special consideration in the arrangement of such an ordinary place as the family wrap closet may make a very great difference in the smooth running of the household during those busy morning minutes when the children are getting off to school. A closet equipped with a pole and some hangers, hooks placed low enough for children to reach conveniently, and shelves both low and high to hold hats, gloves, rubbers, and galoshes of the smallest as well as the biggest, makes for peace and harmony in the group.'"

"Please go on, I'm interested."

"The living room, if it deserves its name, draws every person in the family to it, because each one finds something there to interest him. There is a quiet nook for reading or writing, a corner for games, music or chatter, and for the littlest ones some suitable toys and picture books on a low shelf with a small chair or two placed handily near. Even in the bath room a towel rack and a toothbrush hook are placed in easy reach of small arms'".

"A good idea."

"In the small home a separate playroom is often out of the question. Some other place must then be set aside for play and for the storage of playthings. It may be a corner of the living room, kitchen, or dining room or part of a bedroom which the child shares with somebody else. Better still, if the young child has his or her separate bedroom it can be made into a combination sleeping and playroom."

"But my children might find the presence of toys in the room too diverting to allow them to go to sleep at naptime."

"Mrs. Carpenter suggests a remedy for that. I'll read what she says. 'Some mothers use a folding screen to divide such a room into two units but even with toys in sight a sleep habit can be built by separating play and sleepy time on the schedule. If the toys are kept in a chest under the bed or in the closet, or in a cupboard with doors, this problem of their distracting influence does not exist.'"

"The idea seems to be, doesn't it, that the child needs space and property that he may call his own, and home furnishings that will suit his size and needs?"

Low shelves for toys and books are recommended by this article as inexpensive to build and most convenient for children to keep their toys, books, and play materials. Painted yellow, orange, or a pleasant green they are a delight to early childhood. Later they can be painted ivory and become just a tier of low book shelves for the child in his teens.

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"As for other furniture, a comfortable straight chair and a small lightweight table of the folding variety are most useful. If this small furniture has its place in a sunny corner of the room, the child's meal may be served here as a special treat or when the family supper must be late. At other times of the day he will use it for the serious business of coloring with crayons, modeling in clay or looking at picture books."

The Menu Specialist has an idea that you would like a boiled dinner today. January is an especially good month for boiled dinners. I'll read you the menu she has planned for you.

First a Boiled Dinner made with corned or fresh beef -- you will find all the directions for that in your green booklet, Page 29; then, lettuce salad, to provide something fresh, green and crisp for the meal; and, for dessert, Caramel rice pudding or Bread pudding or any other of your favorite starchy puddings. Yes, Angeline, a starchy dessert at this meal is just the thing. The meat and all those vegetables will balance it very nicely. Shall I repeat this delightful easy menu? Boiled dinner, Lettuce salad; Caramel rice or Bread pudding.

Thursday: "Washing Winter Woolens!"

